

PART TWO

WHY FARMER MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS IN AG



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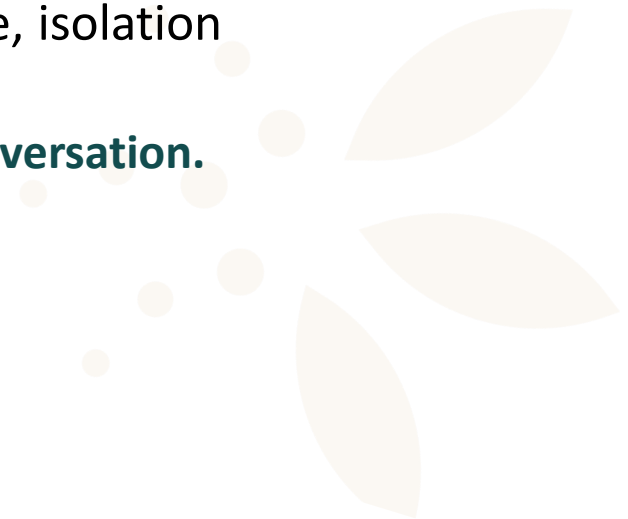
Chief Executive Officer & Lead Researcher



MENTAL HEALTH IS A FARM SAFETY ISSUE

- Mental health and physical safety are not separate silos, they are the same conversation
- Fatigue & psychological stress = elevated injury risk
- Poor mental health impairs sleep, concentration, and decision-making, the same factors that lead to accidents
- Farmers are often reluctant to seek help: stigma, self-reliance, isolation

If you invest in farm safety, mental health has to be part of that conversation.



THE 2021 NATIONAL FARMER MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY

Co-led by Briana Hagen, Dr. Andria Jones, and Rochelle Thompson

68%

of Canadian farmers reported significant stress

58%

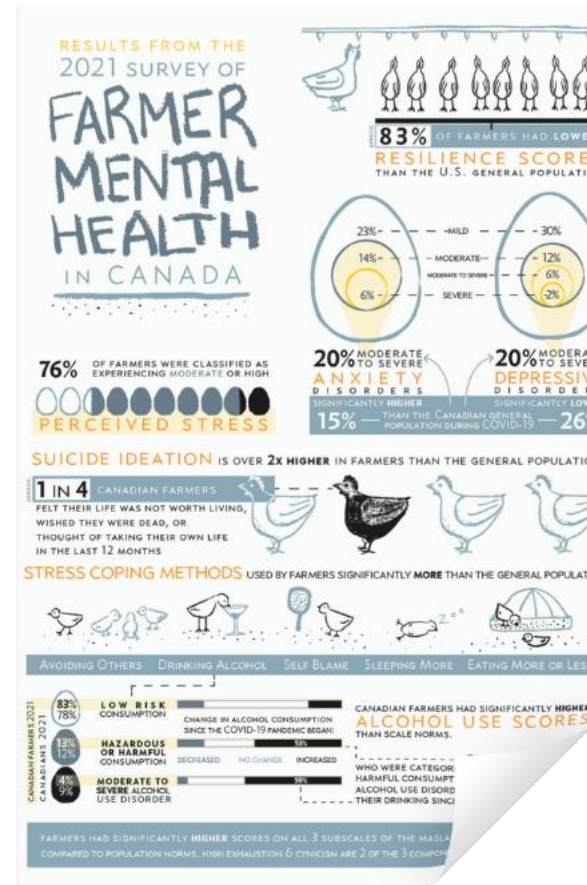
reported anxiety symptoms, compared to 35% in the general population

45%

reported high burnout

1 IN 4

of farmers felt their life was not worth living, wished they were dead or thought of taking their own life in the last 12 months



Additional Findings

- Younger farmers and women reported disproportionately higher rates across all measures
- Farmers in Western Canada and those in production agriculture reported among the highest stress levels
- Most common barriers to help-seeking: stigma, cost, lack of ag-specific services, and not knowing where to turn

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

What to watch for, in others and in yourself

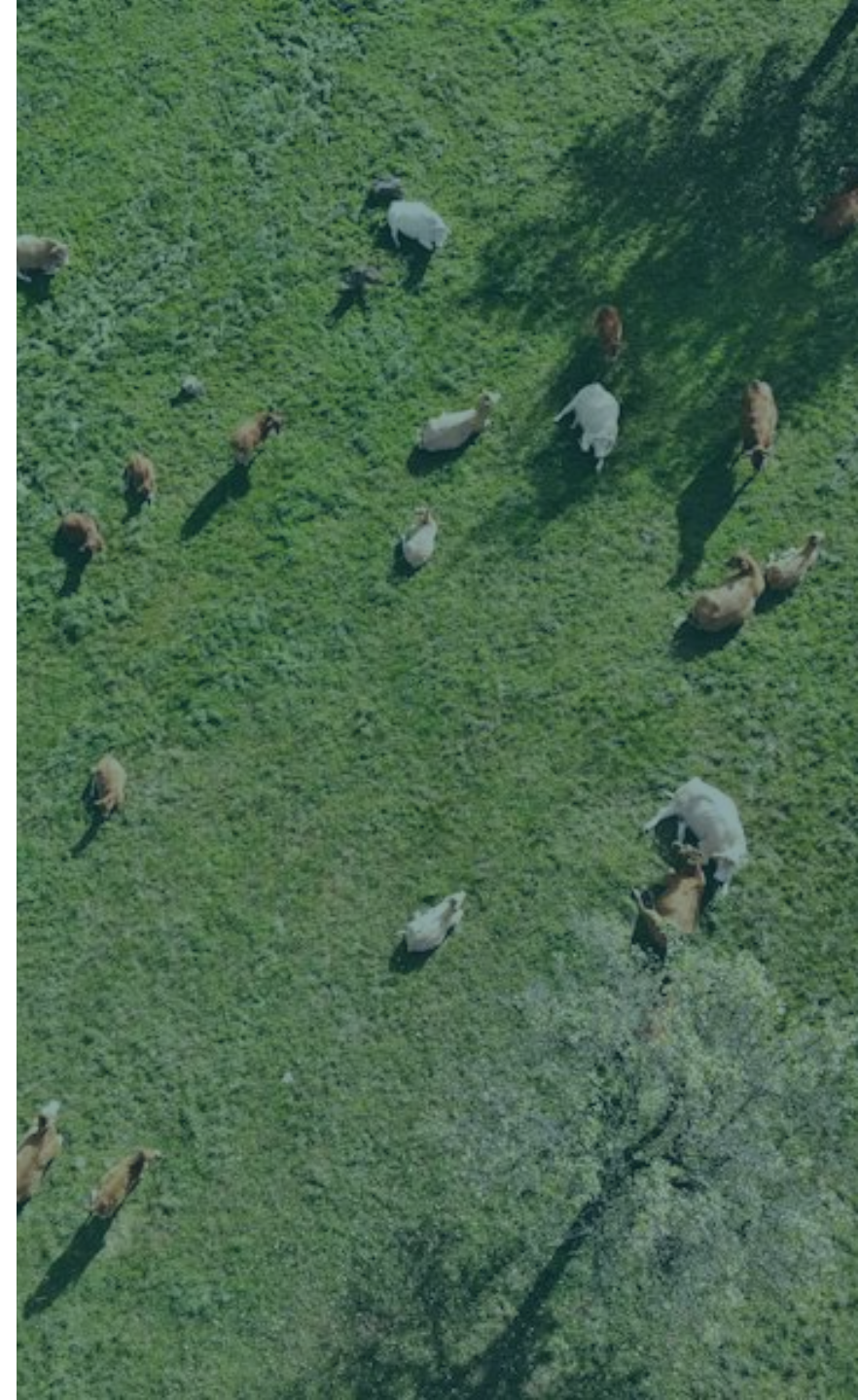
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and community events
- Increased irritability, anger, or conflict
- Neglecting animals, equipment, or farm tasks
- Risk-taking behaviour or cutting corners on safety
- Changes in sleep, appetite, or alcohol and substance use
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or being a burden
- Talking about (or thinking about) not being around or wanting to escape



EMPLOYERS HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES, TOO

- Employers are required to provide a psychologically safe workplace
- That means a workplace free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination
- It means responding appropriately when concerns arise about safety, fitness for work, or risk of harm
- It means accommodating employees when mental health issues affect their ability to work
- These obligations apply whether your employee is a hired hand or a family member
- A spouse, child, or sibling on the payroll is still an employee under the law

Mental health in the workplace isn't just a wellness issue, it's a legal one



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

Provide a safe and respectful environment

Set the tone, model the behaviour

Respond when concerns arise

Don't look away because it's uncomfortable or complicated

Avoid harassment and discrimination

This includes how stress gets expressed under pressure

Take reasonable steps to support someone who is struggling

You don't have to fix it, but you can't ignore it

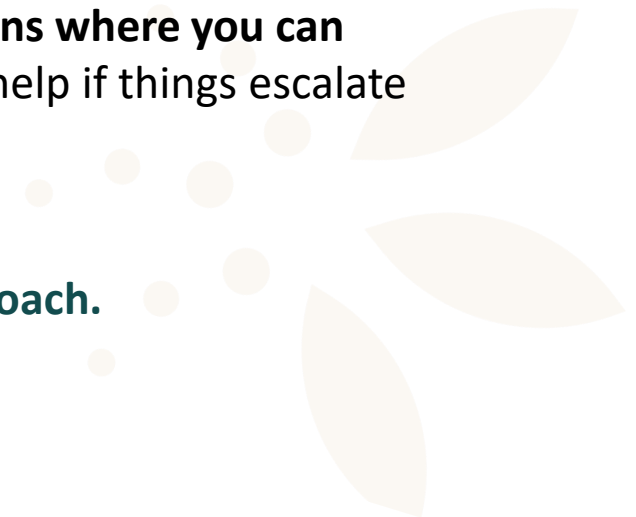
There is no one-size-fits-all approach

But "we're family" is not a reason to do nothing

Document concerns where you can

Even informal notes help if things escalate

You don't need an HR department, you just need a safe approach.



THE CYCLE GOES BOTH WAYS

- ✓ Mental health struggles lead to increased injury risk because of distraction, fatigue, impaired judgment
- ✓ Farm injuries and crises lead to mental health struggles because of grief, financial stress, loss of identity
- ✓ Breaking the cycle requires addressing both simultaneously

A farm safety plan that doesn't include mental health isn't complete.



So, What You Can Do?

Normalize check-ins the same way you normalize equipment checks.

- Include mental health in your safety orientation for workers and family
- Know the farmer crisis line number: 1-866-FARMS01 (1-866-327-6701)
- Share CCAW and CASA resources with your networks
- Advocate for mental health supports in your provincial and national associations

You don't have to be a researcher or a clinician to move this forward. You just have to be someone who shows up.



HOW TO CHECK IN

Ask directly "I've noticed you haven't seemed yourself lately, are you doing okay?"

Listen to understand, not to fix

- You don't need answers. You just need to show up.
- Silence is okay, give them time.

What not to say

- "Everyone's stressed"
- "Toughen up"
- "It could be worse"

When to escalate

- Thoughts of suicide? Stay with them and call 1-866-FARMS01 together
- Not sure? Ask directly: "Are you thinking about ending your life?"

Asking does not plant the idea, it gives permission to tell the truth.



SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE, RIGHT NOW

You don't need to have the answers.
Just help make the connection.



Farmer Crisis Line

1-866-327-6701

Talk/Text Suicide Canada

811

Emergency

911



ONGOING SUPPORT

National Farmer Wellness Network

A Canada-wide network ensuring farmers across the country can access care that is relevant, responsive, and grounded in agricultural realities.

Canadian Mental Health Association

CMHA in your own community may also be able to direct you to mental health services.

Provincial Farmer Wellness Programs

SK: SaskAgMatters; MB: Manitoba Wellness Program;

AB: AgWell AB;

BC: AgSafe BC; NB: Farm Talk Care

ON: Farmer Wellness Initiative; NL: AgriCare

Family Doctor & Local Support

Connect with your family doctor or explore local support in your area.





VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [CCAW.CA](https://ccaw.ca) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

QUESTIONS?



A background image showing two men in silhouette shaking hands in a field. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. In the center, there is a faint logo consisting of three overlapping leaf-like shapes. The text 'CANADIAN CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL WELLBEING' is centered over the image in white, uppercase letters.

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL WELLBEING

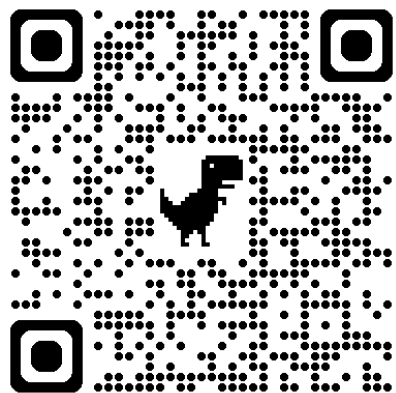


CASA
ACSA

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE SÉCURITÉ AGRICOLE

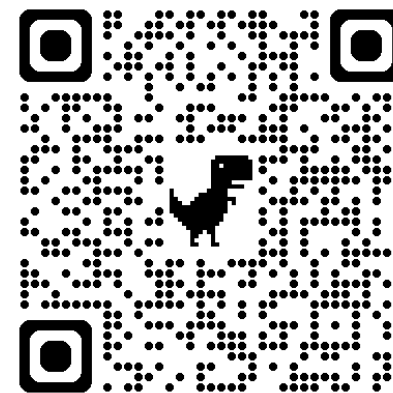


CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
AGRICULTURAL WELLBEING



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THANK YOU



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